

The Paleobiolinguistics of Maize (*Zea mays* L.)

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Abstract

Paleobiolinguistics is used to determine when and where maize (*Zea mays* L.) developed significance for different prehistoric groups of Native America. Dates and locations of proto-languages for which maize terms reconstruct generally accord with crop-origin and dispersal information from plant genetics and archaeobotany. Paleobiolinguistic and other lines of evidence indicate that human interest in maize was extensive millennia before the widespread development of a villagefarming way of life in the New World. © 2014 Society of Ethnobiology.

Keywords

Archaeobotany, Crop origins, Historical linguistics, Native Americans, Paleobiolinguistics, Plant domestication, Plant genetics